

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10

L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 ICA-11
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FM AMEMBASSY AMMAN
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6817
INFO AMCONSUL JERUSALEM
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

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E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PGOV, SCUL, IS, JO, SA
SUBJECT: ISRAELI ARAB PILGRIMS

1. JORDANIAN MINISTER OF ISLAMIC AFFAIRS KAMEL SHARIF IN CONVERSATION WITH DCM JULY 11 CONFIRMED RECENT REPORTS THAT JORDANIAN AND SAUDI ARABIAN GOVERNMENTS HAVE AGREED TO PERMIT 5,000 MUSLIM ARAB ISRAELI CITIZENS TO MAKE THE PILGRIMAGE TO MECCA THIS YEAR (WHICH OCCURS IN OCTOBER).

2. SHARIF SAID THAT JORDAN AND SAUDI ARABIA HAD PERMITTED FOUR ISRAELI ARAB MUSLIM RELIGIOUS LEADERS TO MAKE PILGRIMAGE LAST YEAR AS A PRELIMINARY STEP. THIS YEAR SAUDIS HAD BEEN SOMEWHAT RELUCTANT, FOR SECURITY REASONS, TO PERMIT LARGE NUMBERS OF ISRAELI ARABS TO VISIT SAUDI ARABIA BUT JORDAN HAD PERSUADED THEM TO DO SO. SHARIF SAID HE HAD NEGOTIATED FINAL SAUDI ACCEPTANCE DURING LAST VISIT TO JORDAN OF SAUDI MINISTER OF ISLAMIC AFFAIRS. THEY WILL TRAVEL TO SAUDI ARABIA FROM JORDAN ON SPECIAL TRAVEL DOCUMENTS ISSUED TO THEM UPON ARRIVAL IN AMMAN SINCE SAUDIS DID NOT WISH TO DEAL WITH ISRAELI PASSPORTS.

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3. SHARIF SAID HE EXPECTS TO RECEIVE FINAL LIST OF ISRAELI ARAB PILGRIMS (INCLUDING BOTH MEN AND WOMEN) IN A FEW DAYS. HE SAID OVER 10,000 PERSONS HAVE APPLIED. WHILE ONLY 5,000 WILL BE PROCESSED THIS YEAR, SHARIF HOPES TO EXPAND THE NUMBERS FURTHER NEXT YEAR.

4. AS FOR POSSIBILITY OF RECIPROCAL PERMISSION FOR (NON-

PALESTINIAN) ARABS BEING ASKED OF GOI TO VISIT ISLAMIC
HOLY PLACES IN JERUSALEM, SHARIF SAID THAT THIS WAS NOT
BEING CONSIDERED PRESENTLY BY ARABS. SHARIF FELT IT TACT-
ICALLY PREFERABLE TO CONCENTRATE ON MAKING SUCCESS OF NEW
PROCEDURES FOR MECCA PILGRIMAGE AT PRESENT TIME.

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5. COMMENT: INASMUCH AS SENATOR STONE WAS INSTRUMENTAL IN
PROMOTING IDEA IN CONTACTS WITH GOJ, SAG AND GOI OF ISRAELI
ARAB PILGRIMAGE, WE BELIEVE HE WOULD BE QUITE INTERESTED IN
THIS POSITIVE RESULT OF HIS EFFORT. SUGGEST DEPARTMENT
ADVISE HIM OF ABOVE. PICKERING

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